WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A central server configured to promote products over a computer
network comprises:

a processor configured to receive a specification of a promotion for a product
from a first computer, configured to create an electronic incentive in response to the
specification, configured to transfer the electronic incentive to an application server across
the computer network, the application server coupled to a merchant server, configured to
receive usage data of the electronic incentive from the application server, the usage data
determined in response to a promotion usage condition indicated by the merchant server, and
configured to generate a report in response to the usage data;

a memory coupled to the processor, the memory configured to store the
electronic incentive, configured to store the usage data, and configured to store the report;

wherein data associated with the electronic incentive is transferred from the
application server to the merchant server;

wherein the merchant server specifies rendering of the data associated with the
electronic incentive; and

wherein the promotion usage condition is indicated in the merchant server
when a user coupled thereto fulfills requirements of the electronic incentive.

2. The central server of claim 1 wherein the electronic incentive
comprises an offer selected from the group: cents off, percent discount, price point, buy X get
Y free, solution selling, promotion content.

3. The central server of claim 1 wherein the electronic incentive
comprises a delivery method selected from the group: non-targeted, targeted category,
targeted usage, targeted brand, targeted market.

4. The central server of claim 3 wherein the electronic incentive
comprises a tracking code.

5. The central server of claim 3 wherein the electronic incentive
comprises calendar data selected from the group: effective data, expiration date.

6. The central server of claim 3 wherein the electronic incentive
comprises a network computer address.

1   7.   The central server of claim 4 wherein the usage data from the

2   application server comprises data selected from the group: demographic data of the user, a

3   geographic indicator of the user, a number of products purchased by the user, currency value

4   of products purchased by the user, a list of products purchased by the user, the tracking code.

1   8.   A merchant server coupled to a client system comprises:

2   a processor configured to request promotions from an application server

3   coupled to the merchant server, configured to receive a description of a promotion from the

4   application server, the description including pre-conditions and a user benefit, configured to

5   determine an output representation of the promotion in response to the description of the

6   promotion, configured to transmit the output representation of the description to a client

7   system for display to a user, configured to receive a selection of at least one item from the

8   client system, configured to transmit the selection of the at least one item to the application

9   server, configured to receive an indication that the user is provided with the user benefit from

10   the application server, and configured to store in a log a record that the user is provided with

11   the user benefit; and

12   a memory coupled to the processor, the memory configured to store the

13   description of the promotion, configured to store the selection of the at least one item.

1   9.   The merchant server of claim 8 wherein the user benefit is selected

2   from the class: cents off, percent discount, price point, buy X get Y free, solution selling,

3   promotion content.

1   10.   The merchant server of claim 8 wherein the processor is configured to

2   receive the description when the user meets target criteria, the target criteria being selected

3   from the class: targeted user, targeted user demographic, targeted user usage, targeted user

4   brand, targeted user market.

1   11.   The merchant server of claim 8 wherein the pre-conditions are selected

2   from the class: purchase of an item, purchase of a quantity of an item, purchase of at least two

3   different items.

1   12.   The merchant server of claim 8 wherein the processor is configured to

2   determine a category of items for display for the client system, and configured to request

3   promotions from the application server in response to the category of items.

1 13. The merchant server of claim 8 wherein the processor is also
2 configured to transmit a plurality of items to the client system for display, and configured to
3 request promotions from the application server in response to the plurality of items.

1 14. The merchant server of claim 8 wherein the processor is also
2 configured to receive a selection of a trigger item from the client system, and configured to
3 request promotions from the application server in response to the trigger item.

1 15. An application server comprises:
2 a processor configured to receive an electronic incentive from a central server,
3 the electronic incentive including a pre-condition and a benefit, configured to receive a
4 request from a merchant server for electronic incentives, configured to provide a description
5 of the electronic incentive to the merchant server in response to the request, the description
6 including a description of the pre-condition and the benefit, configured to receive from the
7 merchant server a selection by a user of at least one item, configured to determine whether
8 the selection of the one item fulfills the pre-condition, and configured to provide the
9 merchant server with the benefit when the selection of the one item fulfills the pre-condition;
10 a memory coupled to the processor configured to store the electronic
11 incentive, and configured to store a record that the electronic incentive has been used, when
12 the selection of the one item fulfills the pre-condition.

1 16. The application server of claim 15 wherein the request from the
2 merchant server also includes a description of a shopping category of a user.

1 17. The application server of claim 15 wherein the request from the
2 merchant server also includes an indicator of items previously selected by the user or
3 currently displayed to the user.

1 18. The application server of claim 15 wherein the pre-condition
2 comprises purchase of the one item.

1 19. The application server of claim 15 wherein the request from the
2 merchant server also includes an identifier of the user.

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1   20.   The application server of claim 15 wherein the processor is also

2 configured to forward the record that the electronic incentive has been used to a centralized

3 server.

1   21.   The application server of claim 15 wherein the application server and

2 the merchant server are co-located.